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The Church The Savior of the Social Order

BY ALFRED WILSON SWAN

AT the threshold of this academic year wings hovered over Europe. At Munich death in the afternoon hung hawk-like over its prey. And almost the parable was fulfilled of André Maurois who, in *The Miracle of England,* reminds us that in an earlier geologic age the Thames was tributary to the Rhine.

But in that same summer there gathered in those low countries in the city of Utrecht in the Netherlands a company of Christians intent to form a World Council of Churches. It was not a large company; only a hundred odd were there. But it was an important company of devoted leaders from a wide variety of churches. The Archbishop of York presided. The Greek and Russian Orthodox churches had two archbishops present. Lutherans had representatives from the Scandinavian and Baltic churches. The United Church of Canada had delegates. The president of Princeton Theological Seminary stood for American Presbyterians. The African Methodist Episcopal Church had a bishop in the company. Baptists, Friends, Wesleyans were included. The World's Sunday School Association, and the International Y. M. and Y. W. C. A., with John R. Mott, were in their places. In fact, so widely representative was this gathering, that it well stands as a historic landmark in the spiritual life of mankind.

Now it is of the utmost significance that at the very moment when doom hung most ominously over the world, religion was gathering quietly but surely with enlarged purpose to extend its saving mission to men. This is what the church is always trying to do. It is always trying to ward off a blow, and to provide a shelter for the larger life of mankind.

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And it is of first importance that each generation understand and appreciate the relation between religion and the human order. Religion seeks to save mankind from self-destructive fragmentation by imposing upon it in love those patterns of conduct and association which will organize and unify its life. For instance, as is illustrated in this area urgent of immediate examination, in the realm of international fractures it is necessary to begin with a unifying religious concept like the church, before we can ever hope to achieve a unifying political reality like an international order. The church is anterior and precedent to the ensuing social order. We will never get international order while we have religious anarchy. We must therefore set ourselves to the solid business of fashioning a World Council of Churches.

In a generation, then, that does not lack courage, but may want for certainty, we will do well to consider, first, *how the church is the savior of the social order.*

I

For one thing, the church is a saving force within the social order by gathering men into a sustaining fellowship.

That is the way it always begins. The Master had the capacity to draw men to him. And he so infused himself into them, and drew them to one another, that when he was parted from them the cohesive forces of their common life remained. Nothing could separate them from that experience of the love of God in their corporate fellowship.

We have sometimes overlooked the means by which that company was drawn together. In that first fellowship of the disciples there was much of pure joy. They were out in the open. They gloried in the fair face of the fields and the winged birds of the air. They could read the signs in the sky, when the sun set red, and when the stars marched across the night. They knew the gusty winds on the waves, and tasted the tang of breakfast in the morning by the lakeside. It is inconceivable, surely, that their talk was not mixed with song. And though their melodies are lost, the vigor of their comradeship is still there upon the page and between the lines. Indeed, the Master was criticized precisely because his band was so irrepressibly exuberant, and wore never the long faces of the conventionally devout. He replied significantly that the friends of a bridegroom rejoice with him. Something like that characterized that little company of long ago.

Now the church begins in joy. The service of worship rightly opens with some Doxology of Thanksgiving, to "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." In the solemnity of the setting we should not lose sight of the celebration that life is good. That whole mood of jubilance should be sustaining to every man or woman drawn within the portals of a church by the music of its mind.

The very structure of a cathedral, as Tolstoi pointed out in *The Coffee-House at Surat,* is in praise of the wonder of the world. The stones of its floor are the solid earth; its pillars are trees, often crowned with leafy-work; the vault above is intimation of "the spacious firmament on high"; the font is a drop of the ocean; and the lights are like the orbs in the sky above. A church is a place to be enjoyed, in token whereof it idealizes the world about. It lifts us from the drab and common place, of the flats we live in and of the shoddiness that lives in us, and assures us that here is the gate of heaven, and that in this place at least all is right with the world. A society that will persist in bathing its mind in such atmosphere will find itself perpetually reinvigorated.

Central in the church is the man, the emblem of fellowship. The Cross is the symbol of man with his arms outstretched. And though on the crucifix they are pinioned from doing their work of love, they were outstretched to bless the world with more than the gesture of grace. Central in the church is the experience of fellowship. Again Tolstoi expresses the perfect metaphor. "Where is there a book of the law so clear to each man as that written in his heart? What sacrifices equal the self-denials which loving men and women make for one another? And what altar can be compared with the heart of a good man, on which God himself accepts the sacrifice?"

In the church we are surrounded with this sustaining sense of comradeship. It provides a standard of life in which one can put his confidence. This is well attested in the not-so-silly advice of Beatrice Fairfax in her column for the love-lorn. Wrote a young man: "I have just come to a city where I am unknown. I have a good job, but as yet no friends. I do not care for the kind I can pick up in front of the Princess theater. What shall I do?" Wrote the wise Miss Fairfax: "My dear young man, go to a church, attend its Sunday school, join its young people's society. This will gain you entree among the best people of the community." That is more solidly true than we often realize. For all the fun we poke at the stuffiness of churches and some church people, yet here are folk seriously engaged in the important business of more effectively socializing themselves, in their conversation and walk. You can tell what time of day it is by them, for they set their consciences by the will of God, as countrymen set their watches by the sun. It is good and strengthening to let one's life be gathered up in such a fellowship.

Such fellowship should do for men what the various forms of fraternity life and fraternal order, at their best, may do. It surrounds men with the encouragement of comrades. It says to men: "We are expecting you to do your best. The standards of life which we hold are widely recognized, and they will stand the test. We shall be sorry when they are not observed by you; and will rejoice when they minister to your character and success." The effect of this coercion of comradeship is tremendous. It helps men live up to their best selves. It encourages them when they are discouraged, and strengthens them when they are weak.

The church molds us by bending us toward each other. In our endeavor collectively to discover the whole truth, we submit ourselves to hear the truth as

other men see it, as well as to express it as we do. It is thus a great socializing force, exerting its pressures of good will upon character and infusing its beneficent authority into the social mix. In it are tremendous forces playing upon the consciences of men who are striving to live the good life and to fashion the great society. It is this that lifts life out of triviality and gives it significance.

The church saves men by gathering them into a comradeship of life. When it fails to do this, it may be because that comradeship is experienced only in form and ritual, and not in the actualities of vocation

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and residence. But the church is a redemptive force within society by gathering men into its fellowship.

II

Moreover, the church is a saving force within the social order by providing the laboratory for the development of the good society.

Said Phillips Brooks, "All history since New Testament times is the Divine Man becoming the Divine Society." Beginning with the One, the natural history of that life spreads to include the Twelve. This was the cell-theory of organic growth and of social expansion. There were failures from the beginning. There was contention and rivalry; and one failed altogether. But the place was taken and the vacancy filled, and the company became the growing church, which is the leaven of new life in society, and the salt that flavors the meal of humanity.

The church is a living laboratory, in which new forms of life are worked out and given to the world. This is a remarkable device for protecting the new good things, until they become strong enough to be transplanted into the field of the world. Taken in its broadest sense the spiritual church of mankind is the mother of all good. Everything good begins within this medium, and overflows into the life of the world surrounding.

The good physician is near the heart of the church, and hospitals for the helpless were begun by it. They have often outgrown their tie with the organized church, but many of them acknowledge the tie in bearing some sainted name. Social security is an offspring of the church, a form of life grown long in the seedbed of the hospice for the orphaned and alone, and expanding to the ever widening circle of human need. Economic forms begin sometimes in the church. The Presbyterian Ministers Fund is the oldest and probably the soundest insurance company in America, as any informed underwriter will affirm. The gains which the church sought for her servants, she now urges be more widely extended to the constituent members of society at large, in those forms of accident, unemployment, and retirement insurance, which private or public agencies can provide.

Education is an offspring of the church, from the day the Founder took a child and set him in the midst. Although the world is as yet but half literate, an educated society is a youth-centered one. Education, preserved through the dim Dark Ages in the church, and released both through and in spite of the church in the awakenings, is blessed by the church even in its secular settings today. For education is a part of the revelation of the nature of the world and of life, by the self-giving of the teacher to the pupil. It is a vital process that best takes place in the midst of the realities of social and emotional conditioning.

Government is a scion of the church, valid only on the thesis that there is an order of fact and action, to which we must give our allegiance if society is to endure. The aspirations of mankind toward an international order are applications of the Church Universal to the secular state of mankind. It sometimes takes a long time for a new form of life to get born. And the church needs to surround itself with the Chapels of All Nations, in preparation for the day when it shall speak with such gift of tongues as shall cause every man to hear in the language of his heart. The church must humbly cure itself of its own divisiveness before it can inspire unity in mankind. We cannot have a Society of Nations before we have a Society of Friends. And the spiritual society is anterior to the political. But the political might well take its cue from the spiritual. For it is a sound thesis, that the church is the fountain of the desirable and enduring forms of life.

There are times, of course, when the church seems little more than a shelter-house from the storm of the world. When society breaks down, men come in out of the storm. More than once society has been so bad that multitudes have felt that the only thing to do was to retreat from the world, and let the world go the way of destruction. Then the church was a storm-

cellar, and a bomb-proof shelter. And it brought the precious things through the ages dark and obscure to the safety of a brighter time.

But the real business of the church is not escape from darkness. It is in the illumination business. It is not a candle to be hid under a bushel; it is a beacon light on a hill, to guide the belated airman to his appointed destiny. Even in the darkness it is its business to uncover its face, and to shine, though like a candle burning in the night.

The church is doing this, infusing sanity and health into the world's insanity and sickness. The church must expand, by money, by sacrifice, and by prayer. The spiritual center is the good man; the periphery is the good society. The mediating influence is the church of those who seek to imprint the pattern and character of the Good Man upon the face of the world.

A World Council of Churches moves in the right direction, and we ought not now to be utterly discouraged. The Hebrew-Christian tradition of man's kinship with the Divine and of the Divine interest in man has now no serious intellectual rival in the world. In the last century and a half it has infused itself into every continent. It is not yet registered in the institutions of mankind at large, where Machiavellian politics prevail. But it contains the one serious challenge to secularism and materialism, nationalism and racialism, which deny all universal religion. This irreligion sets man against his brother, instead of uniting men in fellowship. It cannot in the end possess the earth. It is intellectually and dynamically incapable of so doing. Only a church hospitable to every class and to every color can give to the world a social order capable of redeeming it from destruction and death.

The best peace insurance in the world is the furthering of the church and the extension of its mission. The only thing that can build a new world is the church of God. The church need not be the external ruler. But it must be its design for living, and the fountain of its inspirations and actions.

They who are to furnish the intellectual and social leadership of the coming generation will do well to appreciate the imperative necessity that religion be given its way through the church to impress itself upon the pattern of life. The church is today's dream of the world tomorrow, and as such is the source of the good society. And all who hope under God for a better world for themselves and their children will encourage the church to do its saving work.

III

But once more, the church is the savior of society by relating present human life to an eternal scenery.

In her not insensitive *With Malice Toward Some* Margaret Halsey, an American visitor in England, remarks that after walking among the monuments in the English cathedrals one begins to feel so much a part of the personages who are celebrated there, that they appear the normal order, and death that separates us from them a minor matter, like having a cold. Without impiety one can observe that not much separates us from them. They constitute the immortal residuum of the human story.

Scenes may come and scenes may go, but the company of the noble stands. The church is a device for relating us to that company now, and admitting us to it, when our present participation in the world of space-time for us is past. In a recent play set in Valley Forge, it is said of George Washington, "There are some men who lift the age they inhabit, till all men walk on higher ground in that lifetime." Something like that is the influence of the great souls on every age. And the church gathers up that influence for us, so that it may become part of the vitality of our lives. Likewise we, by grace and devoted good intent, become part of that immortal life-stream of mankind.

There is this that transcends the historic scene, as the social transcends the individual. And it is this company of the saints who from their labors rest, that the church with pride preserves alive and cherishes.

We are not of that company as yet, for we are of the Church Visible and Tribulant. But we may, if carried by faith and penitence, be finally of the Church Invisible and Triumphant. It is this that makes the church the most important device contrived by mankind for his redemption from futility and death. It is the eternal reservoir of power. Verily we feed upon the lives of those who have gone before. And religion becomes life's most enduring reality. What happens here of worth in the epic of the race as history is gathered up into the infinite and indestructible company of the saints.

The company of one hundred men at Utrecht must have had a more than historic faith to plan a World Council Churches, when the very roof of the world was ready to fall in, and may fall in yet. But they laid the foundation for the world culture that is to appear, out of which the testament of beauty may yet arise. Yet these men take their significance chiefly from the fact that they propose to perpetuate a fellowship that was begun nearly two millenniums ago. Then there were but twelve who went out into a world wholly hostile. Their Leader said the powers of hell should not prevail against the church. And that church, by its age-old wisdom and its invincible love, is perpetually but surely emerging in the life of man.

The question for our generation is only whether we are assisting its further emergence amongst us. The triumph of the church is certain. Our share in that triumph depends upon the degree to which we permit that Spirit which was in Christ, reconciling the world, to work in and through us, and bring us to Itself.

There is a great galaxy of phrases, carried in that canticle of the ancient church, the "Te Deum Laudamus," "We Praise Thee, O God," that ought to lift us, as we view the church as the Savior of our world:

"The glorious company of the apostles,
The goodly fellowship of the prophets,
The noble army of martyrs,
The Holy Church throughout the world acknowledge thee,
The Father Everlasting."

Where to Go When Trouble Comes

By Clarence E. Macartney

Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Psalm 50:15.

DE FOE, the author of *Robinson Crusoe,* was not only a great story teller but a wise and instructed Christian. There is a vast amount of practical, everyday theology packed in the pages of his marvelous narrative of the shipwreck and island life of Robinson Crusoe.

Sometime after Robinson Crusoe had been cast on the island, he was taken desperately ill. It is bad enough to be sick at home, where you have friends and members of the family to look after you, or in the hospital, where you have the doctors and the nurses; but much worse to be sick all by yourself on a lonely island. With a great effort Robinson managed to open the lid of a chest which he had retrieved from the wreck of the ship. Searching for medicine, and divinely led, as he was afterwards sure, he found in the chest not only medicine for the body but medicine for the soul, a Bible. After he had taken the medicine, he opened the Bible, and the first words on which his eye fell were these from the 50th Psalm, "Call on me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify my name."

This greatly impressed Robinson Crusoe and he began to hope that perhaps God would heal him of his sickness and deliver him from his solitary island and bring him back to his native land and to his friends once more. Before he went to bed that night he did a thing which he had never done before in his life. He knelt down and prayed, and in his prayer he asked God that he would fulfill the promise of that verse in his own life, heal him of his sickness and deliver him from his wave-washed island. When he had so prayed he felt much better, and sank into an untroubled sleep. Some days afterwards he was walking along the shore with his gun over his shoulder, when his heart almost stopped as he saw on the sand the imprint of the foot of a savage. He fled immediately to his stockade, and climbing the wall, pulled the ladder in after him in the greatest fear and terror. Then those words came to his mind again, "Call on me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee," and he began to lose his fear.

This verse in which the shipwrecked mariner found comfort is good for all, for trouble comes to all. The verse sets before us the fact of trouble, what to do and where to go when trouble comes, and what God promises he will do.

I

THE FACT OF TROUBLE

Trouble is universal. It is no respecter of persons. It comes to a lonely ship-wrecked sailor like Robinson Crusoe on his solitary island, and it comes to the man who rubs elbows with millions of other men in the great cities of the world. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Light a brush fire towards the evening, and watch the sparks as they fly upward! They are the inevitable result and accompaniment of the fire. Likewise, wherever the fire of life is lighted, wherever a man passes through the experiences of this world, the sparks of trouble fly upward. There are all kinds of troubles; troubles of body, and troubles of the mind, and troubles of the soul, troubles we bring upon ourselves and troubles others bring upon us. Sorrow, fear, loneliness, death (at least we think it is a trouble),

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and sin, the sorest of all troubles. Ofttimes those who seem to have the fewest troubles will, in reality, have the most. Like the king on the walls of Samaria, they wear their sack-cloth within.

> If every man's internal care
> Were written on his brow,
> How many who our envy share,
> Would have our pity now.

Early in the morning the streets and sidewalks of the city here begin to resound with the marching feet of the toilers and the buyers and sellers. At noon the chorus reaches its loudest volume; then the sound begins to decrease, until when midnight comes the streets are deserted, save for the nightwatchman and the reveler. But the sound of the marching feet of the army of the troubled never ceases. Morning, noon, evening and midnight I hear them marching by in an endless procession. March! March! March!

Since trouble is the lot of man in this life, it must

be that it has some good and high purpose. It would indeed be a strange world if there were no troubles, if there were not an ache, or a pain, or a sorrow, or a tear, or an anxiety. Life, as far as we can see, would be a Dead Sea of bliss, in which one could float, but could not swim or make progress. Without trouble in the world, there could be no theater for the display of life's greatest things. Trouble is the foil against which the highest virtues shine. When I think about heaven, where there will be no trouble, I wonder what is to take the place there of those things which we recognize to be the greatest in life, and which are all related to trouble, for how could there be courage, if there were no danger? How could there be tenderness, if there were no pain? How could there be sympathy and compassion, if there were no hardship? How could there be hope, if there were no night of doubt? Yes, there must be some great and good purpose in the arrangement of life so abounding in all kinds of trouble.

Two men were once discussing the question as to why it is you cannot see the stars in the daytime. The stars are still there; they are not farther away by day than they are by night. Why is it that we cannot see them? One ventured the opinion that if a man went far enough down into a hole in the earth and looked up, he could see the stars by day. The other doubted that such would be the case, but agreed to make the experiment. He was lowered in a basket into a well. After he had been lowered for some distance, those who were holding the rope asked him if he could see the stars. He said, No. Still further down, and again they asked him if he could see the stars. Again his answer was, No. But when he had been lowered to a great depth, he looked up, and lo, he could see the stars. God lowers men into the well of trouble that they may see the stars, that they may know the great things of life which are hid from them by the sunlight of prosperity.

II

WHERE TO GO WHEN TROUBLE COMES

"Call on me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee." There is nothing ambiguous or uncertain about that. "Call on me," God says, "and I will deliver thee."

There are other things that men do, and other places that they go when trouble comes to them. Some sink and collapse in helplessness and fear. Others rebel against God, and do what Job's wife advised him to do, but which he did not do, "curse God and die." Others accept trouble, but with a grim stoical submission. But that is not what God tells us to do. He says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee." The Bible has little to say about God as an abstraction, or little to say by way of definition of his attributes. What it does is to present him and declare him as the "performing" God, the God who acts, and not only that, but a covenant-making God. And here is one of his covenants. "Call on me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee." When men do that, they recognize that God is over all, that there is a higher will at work in the world than our own, and that no trouble can come to us without God's permission, and that out of the thousands and thousands of troubles that we might have had, this is the one that he has chosen for us.

There are plenty of persons who will underline this verse with the red ink of personal experience. In the time of their trouble they called on God. Deliverance came, and came in a way that left no doubt in their mind as to whether or not God had heard them and answered them. The Bible is full of such instances. When the chariots of Pharaoh were rumbling behind them, and the Red Sea yawned before them, Moses called upon God, and God stretched out his arm and opened a way for them through the sea. When Sennacherib, king of Assyria, sent his blasphemous and insulting letter to the king of Judah, Hezekiah took the letter and spread it out before the Lord, and God heard him and smote the Assyrian host.

> The Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast
> And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed.

When Peter lay bound in Herod's dungeon, and guarded by sixteen soldiers, Peter prayed, and the disciples prayed at Mary's house, and God heard them and sent an angel to deliver Peter. When Paul's ship was driven up and down in the storm in the Mediterranean, Paul prayed, and an angel spoke to him and told him that he must stand before Caesar, and that not a soul on the ship would be lost. When Jesus prayed before his cup in Gethsemane, God heard him and sent an angel to deliver him and strengthen him.

But what of those who were not delivered when they prayed? As clearly as I saw it then so many years ago I can see it now. A young minister, just commencing my work, I stepped to the window of a shabby ticket office of the Erie Railroad in New York to buy a ticket. The man saw the minister's book, and when he made out the ticket, said, "Do you believe in prayer?" Then he went on to tell me of the long illness of his wife, and how eagerly, but unavailingly, they had prayed for her recovery. I gave him the best answer I could, but I ought to be able to answer him much better now than I did then, since I know more of the Bible and more of life than I did then. What shall we say, then, about those who in their trouble called upon God? This was the verse that they had marked in their Bible. It was the foundation upon which stood their faith. But one day they prayed and were not delivered. This man had a thorn in the flesh and asked God to cure his disease; but the sickness did not leave him. This man had managed to buy a home by years of labor and self-denial. Then the depression came. He lost his employment, and was unable to keep up the payments. He prayed earnestly that he might get a job and be able to keep his home for himself and his family. But the home was lost.

And here is another case, a father and mother who had a beautiful child, a golden-haired little girl. One day she was taken sick. They believed in prayer, and in their great distress and anxiety called upon God to hear their prayer and save her life. But lower and

lower sank the flame of life until it flickered and went out and left the parents in darkness. They called, but God did not deliver. Why? Was it because he did not hear, or because he did not care, or because there is no God?

A British mother with a son in the army in France during the war went daily to special services and masses, for she was a Roman Catholic, supplicating God to watch over her son and bring him back safe from the war. One morning as she returned from the mass she found on the table at her home the telegram from the war department, telling her of the death of her son who had been killed in battle. She said to her friends, "I am through with religion. Either there is no God, or he doesn't care."

What shall we say, then, about such cases? The answer is that God has more than one kind of deliverance. As Robinson Crusoe mused over this verse, he began to think less about deliverance from his solitary island and more about his relationship to God. He began to put the emphasis upon the third clause of this great verse, "Thou shalt glorify my name." Take the case of St. Paul, who had a grievous thorn in the flesh, "a very messenger of Satan," he calls it, to tempt him and buffet him. Thrice, he tells us, he earnestly besought God to take away this thorn, whatever it was. Surely if ever a man knew how to pray that man was Paul. Surely if ever a man had faith, that man was Paul. Surely if ever a man deserved, from our point of view, to have his prayers answered, that man was Paul. Yet, in the way in which he asked it, his prayer was not answered. The thorn was not plucked out of his flesh, but God did something greater than that for him. He said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Henceforth, Paul tells us, he is able to glory in his thorn and in his tribulation, and rejoice in it, for, he says, "When I am weak, then I am strong."

Friends of mine were given by God a little child, a lovely daughter. She was the joy of their home and the apple of their eye. But one day the child was taken sick. These earnest Christians called upon God to deliver, but the life of the child was not spared. Yet this providence did not destroy their faith, but deepened it. The father said that he dated his deeper experience as a Christian from that sorrow and that it brought him to the faith, never to be shaken, that God always answers prayer and always delivers, although his deliverance may be above that for which we ask. An incident like this throws light upon that great expression of the apostle, that God is able to do for us "far above all that we can ask or think." Yes, all-wise and tender Heavenly Father, how true that is!

If called like Abram's child to climb
The hill of Sacrifice,
Some angel may be there in time,
Deliverance shall arise.

Or if some darker lot be good,
O, teach us to endure
The sorrow, pain and solitude
That make the spirit pure.

Never hesitate, then, to call upon God. Never doubt that he hears. Never doubt that in his own way he will deliver. If we call upon him, he will always do far above what we can ask or think.

The darkest and sorest trouble of all is sin. Sin is the fountain and source of all other trouble. It is with regard to this trouble, above all others, that the great promises of God's deliverances are made. At first, when he came upon that verse, "Call on me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee," Robinson Crusoe was thinking only of deliverance from his lonely life on the wave-washed island. But afterwards, as he read the Bible he began to think, not about his physical and geographical condition, but about his spiritual condition, not how far he was from England and his fellow men, but how far he was from God. He began to pray to God to deliver him in the sense of repentance and forgiveness, and discovered that deliverance from sin is a much greater blessing than deliverance from affliction.

As trouble in life brings out the finest qualities of the soul, so God's deliverance from sin brings out what is loveliest and most sublime in God, his forgiveness. He hath made with us his eternal covenant and sealed it with the blood of his own Son. And that covenant is, that if we come unto him he will in no wise cast us out. When did God ever fail to deliver the sinner who called on him? No! God has never done that. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. Call on him, and he will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify his name.

The Original Teachings of Jesus

By George Mecklenburg

And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up—and when the Sabbath was come he began to teach in the synagogue. Mark 6:1-3.

I THINK we should give more attention to Nazareth where Jesus was brought up. Everywhere I went in Palestine some great church or shrine had been built—except in Nazareth. You may read volumes of theology and find little mention of Nazareth. Art has ignored the little town. Our hymnals have no songs to Nazareth. The reason is that we have given so much thought to the birth of Christ and Bethlehem, and the death of Jesus and Jerusalem. The world has yet to study properly the fact that Jesus was brought up, that he lived a normal human life on our earth nineteen hundred years ago. And what is wrong with our theology is that we have underemphasized the earthly, historical Jesus who came to Nazareth to be brought up.

You may wonder why Jesus was brought to Nazareth, which was an insignificant, unknown town up in the hills near the Esdraelon valley. Why was he not born near the Acropolis, in sight of the Parthenon, under the influence of giants of genius—Sophocles, Eurip-

ides, the brains of the earth? Or why was he not born in Rome under the shadow of the Forum where the problems of the earth were discussed, and from which power went out to the remotest villages of civilization? Or why was he not born in Alexandria, the city of the greatest library of that day, where the philosophers of the earth from the east and the west met?

I think it was because the religion of Jesus Christ was not to be the intellectualism of Greece nor the ruthless power of Rome nor the learning of Alexandria. It was not to be confounded with the traditions of men. Jesus Christ came with an original appeal to

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mankind. Therefore, God selected Nazareth for Jesus' bringing up.

THE JESUS WHO LIVED IN NAZARETH

Now I believe the original teachings of Jesus can best be understood by going back to Nazareth to study the Jewish home in which he was brought up, the synagogue in which he worshiped, the market place in which he traded and the daily work in which he was engaged, making agricultural implements with his father.

It may be well to think a moment not only on the original teachings of Christ, but on his originality. Was Jesus original? Or did he only echo the best in previous writers?

First it must be said that Jesus said he came not to destroy but to fulfill. He built not a new structure of salvation, but one whose foundation was laid in Old Testament times.

Then it must be realized that there is no originality in the moral, spiritual field as there is in science. When my classmate, Oliver Lee, discovers a star never before seen, that's originality. Not so in religion. Men have from the beginning talked about love, hate, fear, peace, salvation and redemption.

Jesus was most original, though. In what respects?

Jesus was original in what he rejected. He rejected the codes and regulations of the rabbinical teachers. He rejected the idea of Messiah sitting on the throne of David and ruling the temporal powers. He rejected the Old Testament law of divorce. He became independent of the heavy hand of the past. Jesus was original in his intensification of the ideal of love and service. He was original in his emphasis on the rights of the individual. He was original in that he lived his ideal. Other teachers taught abstractly. Jesus lived and died his teachings.

WHAT WERE JESUS' TEACHINGS?

Now let us briefly summarize some of the main points in the original teachings of Jesus.

The first thing that challenges our attention in reading the Gospels is Jesus' teaching about God. He preached good news about God. He walked in a universe that was his home, his Father's house. He walked unafraid in a friendly universe because he knew God so well. There were no doubts in Jesus. He had the most amazing relationship with God. The lilies in their purity came from God. The birds were cared for by God, daily bread came from God. Nothing was too trivial for God's attention. And he said we were to come to God directly. He said, "Pray to thy Father in secret and thy Father who seeth in secret will reward thee openly." He told us to love our enemies, but why did he say that? Because that is the kind of God we have. He is a God of fairness and tolerance. "He maketh the sun to shine on the evil and on the good."

Jesus taught definitely that love lies at the heart of things and that God calls men into fellowship with him. And that is not because of the merit of man but because of the kind of God we have.

Second, Jesus gave us an original, rich conception of prayer. Prayer was not a matter of words. It was a matter of focusing one's whole being on God. He taught that in prayer God's life would come into our life, that we could remove mountains by prayer. He told us just how we should pray. He gave us forms of prayers, and he prayed in the presence of the Apostles. And when Jesus prayed, God was right there.

Third, Jesus gave a new and original conception of man. He did recognize that man was sinful and capable of satanic work and deserved the severest denunciation. But, on the other hand, he said that man was God's child and of infinite value, worth dying for. He said that every man, however beaten, baffled or bruised, was worth more than the empires and the universes. To Jesus the whole world was nothing in comparison to one poor soul.

And, fourth, he taught a brand new idea about sin. Of course, he condemned sin. He showed how evil spoils the soul. He never took sin lightly. The new

thing about sin in the teachings of Jesus was that he saw the sins in the "regular" people of society as blacker than the sins of sinners. He taught that sins of temperament were more damaging than sins of passion. The Pharisee, who was a conventional keeper of law, was to him a sepulcher of dead bones. But the woman caught in sin was pardoned.

Fifth, Jesus taught the people in Nazareth, his home folks, the godliness and nobility of humility. "Except ye become like a little child," he said, "you cannot enter into the Kingdom." He told people that the first shall be last, and the last shall be first. He told people that when they were bidden to a marriage feast they should not seek the first place. He told them not to do their righteousness before men. His teaching on humility was not only original but absolutely fundamental to his entire system of teaching.

But perhaps to us today the most amazing originality was Jesus' teaching regarding money. He taught that which we ourselves have discovered only recently, that wealth is a handicap. It is difficult for a rich man to give himself completely to the work of the Kingdom of God. Then he said, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Jesus was not against wealth. He taught that we should use wealth, but wealth was to be absolutely subordinated to personality.

Finally Jesus announced that life is eternal, that life in God is independent of time and death. He taught "He that knoweth the Father hath eternal life." It was a new kind of immortality, an immortality of quality of life, an immortality disentangled from mere thinking about calendars and days and years.

JESUS' CHALLENGES TO MEN

But besides the original teachings of Jesus, he gives us some tremendous challenges. In fact, there was a challenge in every lesson he taught. He proposed that men should surrender their lives to God. That was new. The surrendering of life was for the purpose of building the Kingdom of God. Men used to dispute about the Kingdom of God—is it of this earth or of heaven? Jesus used the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Earth interchangeably. Time and eternity flowed together in the thought of Jesus. His main thought about the Kingdom certainly was to change this world of jealousy, envy, injustice and greed into a brotherhood of men.

But I think the greatest challenge of Jesus was his challenge for men to live. Buddha, who lived six hundred years before Christ, taught men to suppress desire. Nirvana was the highest goal. Extinction was their highest purpose. But Jesus challenged men to live. He said he came that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly.

It is very important that we understand this part of Jesus' teaching. To Jesus the highest and completest life is a life lived in perfect love. Only on the basis of a divine love that reaches down to the lowest sinner to lift him up can the complete love of God be understood. And this is the same kind of love that we are challenged to live.

Jesus—Judge or Savior?

By Harold L. Lunger

I have not come to judge the world, but to save the world. John 12:47.

WITH his right hand armed with pronged and three-forked lightnings, sweeping down out of the heavens to judge the world—thus has Christ been portrayed by the Flemish painter Rubens. The world is gruesomely depicted as a globe, crowded with flaming cities and wailing men and women. So full of wrath is the face of the Lord that the artist felt compelled to include in his scene the gentler figure of Mary. With an appealing gesture, she is seen clutching at the arm of Christ, seeking to stay his fury.

This picture is typical of a large number of medieval and renaissance paintings, in which Christ is portrayed, either as sitting in judgment upon the world, or as personally inflicting punishment upon evildoers.

Is this, however, a true picture of the nature and work of Christ—and, by implication, of his present body, the church?

I

To such a contemporary Christian saint as Kagawa, Christ appears in a role far different than that of judge. Toyohiko was an illegitimate child, with a frail and sickly body. At an early age he was left in the care of his father's neglected and wronged wife. In this home he was unwanted and abused. At school he was shunned by his classmates. Everywhere his sensitive nature was constantly being tortured. His youth was one of almost unmitigated sorrow and pain. In his *Meditations* he wrote: "As my mass before God I will bring the tears of melancholy. I have now nothing else to offer on God's altar. Instead of the oil of the festival season I will bring before God my bamboo tube of tears."

Then one glorious day, while he was a student in middle school, Kagawa was invited into the home of one of his teachers. It was a Christian home, and the lonely lad, for the first time in his life, received a warm welcome, sympathy and understanding. There he first learned about the love of God, and heard the stories and teachings of the Man who meant so much to these new-found friends. In the course of time, under the influence of this Christian home, the reading of the Bible and prayer, the dawn broke, and Kagawa's soul was flooded with light and life. His melancholy melted away like the mist before the rising sun. Kagawa was saved from all his misery; he was born again.

Recently Kagawa attempted to enumerate the things he owes to Christ. He listed improved health, spiritual peace, the thrill of working with God in the building of his Kingdom, the constant inflow of power from above—in fact, everything that makes life worth living.

Ask Kagawa whether or not Jesus is a heartless judge. His answer will be a quick and unqualified "No!"

Or turn to the Apostle Paul. In what language does he refer to Christ when, as he nears the end of his life, he sits down to write his letters to his spiritual children? Here are samples of his thought: "God has not destined us for his wrath, but to gain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us." "God through Christ has reconciled the world to himself, refusing to count men's offenses against them." "So there is no condemnation any more for those who are in union with Christ Jesus . . . being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Obviously Paul saw in Christ his Savior rather than his judge. Through Christ, he personally had been transported into the realm of grace, where his poor powers were divinely reinforced, his halting reason infused with heavenly wisdom, his sense of failure and guilt replaced with a humble sense of acceptance and forgiveness, and his whole soul flooded with life and hope and joy.

The experiences of Paul, then, like those of Kagawa, bear out the words ascribed to Jesus in a passage we have taken for our text: "I have not come to judge the world, but to save the world." Christ is, fundamentally, the Savior of mankind. Of course, he did not deliver mankind immediately and completely from all its woes. But, as one of my teachers once said, he did break "the power of sin, suffering and death to corrupt and cow men's souls; and he let loose into the world a great torrent of divine life, love and power, which is bound in the end to sweep all obstacles away before its onrush."

And this is the gospel which the Christian church proclaims—not warnings and threats of judgment, but "good news" about Jesus, who offers salvation both to individuals and society.

II

This is not to say, however, that there is no note of judgment in the Christian religion. For there is an element of judgment involved even in the process of salvation itself.

A dozen years ago a young Japanese, by the name of Teishin Yoshida, went to the room of a missionary in Tokyo to inquire if he might become a member of the Bible class that the Christian leader was teaching every Sunday morning in the Y.M.C.A. of the Imperial University. Assured that he would be welcome, the young man started attending, and proved himself an exceptionally sincere student. The class was then studying the Gospel of Luke, and the social and economic demands which Jesus made challenged the young man; for he was already heir to a large fortune, and had under his control seventy-five or a hundred farms, and as many tenant families.

After having had this Japanese boy in his class for some time, the teacher was forced to return to this country and take up a pastorate here because of the necessary retrenchment on the mission fields. About two years ago, however, he was able to return to Japan for a visit. One of the first persons he met in Tokyo was this same young man. Now Yoshida had never become a member of the Christian church, though he had tried earnestly to follow the teachings of Jesus ever since he had heard them presented in that Sunday morning Bible class. But now, he told his old friends, he was ready to be baptized. He showed the former missionary a confession that he had thoughtfully and prayerfully worked out. In this simple statement of belief and purpose, the rich young Japanese declared himself ready to take a step that another rich young ruler many years ago was not willing to take. Having come to the conclusion that holding on to wealth and using it for one's own pleasure was a sin, he had renounced his fortune as a selfish possession and resolved to use every yen of it to better the conditions of his tenants. Seeing the man's utter faith and sincerity, the Christian minister joyfully baptized him. Just before boarding his train to leave the Japanese capital for the boat that would bring him to America, the former missionary received a note from Yoshida which opened with these words: "I am enraptured that my long-cherished wish was fulfilled."

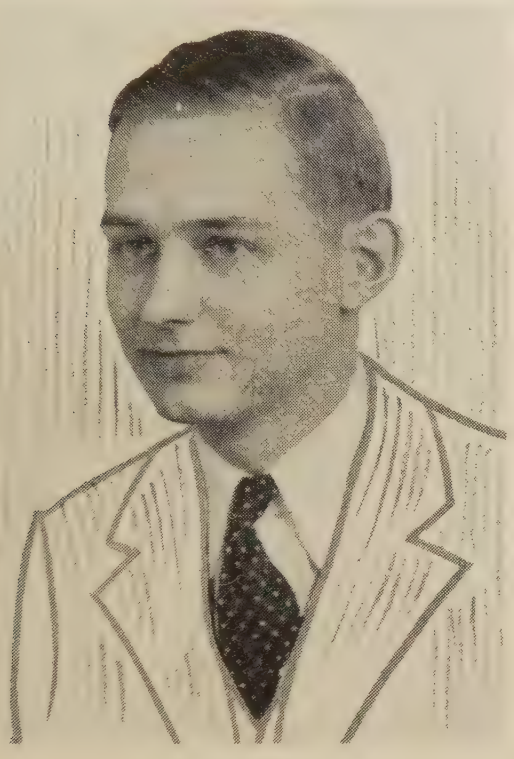
Now here was a man who was saved by Christ. But before he experienced the joys of that salvation, he had passed judgment upon his own life. He himself had condemned and repented of his selfishness and then been baptized. This incident illustrates a great truth: there is an element of judgment involved in Christian salvation. But it is not Christ who does the judging—we must do it for ourselves. That, I take it, is the meaning of repentance—passing judgment upon our own lives, and determining to mend our ways.

Let us turn again to the Apostle Paul. Paul does not look upon Jesus as his judge. But he does judge himself most mercilessly. Recall that exceedingly realistic passage in the seventh chapter of Romans, where Paul cries: "I do not do what I want to do; I do things that I hate. I know that nothing good resides in me; I can will, but I cannot do, what is right. I do not do the good things that I want to do; I do the wrong things that I do not want to do. What a wretched man am I! Who can save me from this doomed body?" Mark you, this is Paul judging himself—not Christ pointing out his sin! In fact, the only thing that brings Paul out of this mood of dejection and self-condemnation, is his remembrance of Christ. For after the question of despair, "Who can save me?" Paul's thought fastens upon Christ, and he sighs with relief: "Thank God! It is done through Jesus Christ our Lord." Paul needed no judge—for he was painfully aware of his own shortcomings. What he needed was a Savior, and this Paul found in Christ.

So it was with the woman taken in adultery. Jesus refused to judge her, as the scribes and Pharisees expected he would. Instead, when he had shamed her accusers away by challenging any of them who was without sin himself to throw the first stone, he turned to the woman with the heartening words: "Neither do I condemn you." Why did Jesus take that attitude? Didn't he disapprove of adultery? Of course he did! But I believe he realized that there was no need for him to condemn that woman. He could tell from her crestfallen face, from her unconcealed sense of shame and humiliation, that, as she stood in his presence, she had already passed judgment upon herself.

No honest person can stand before the perfect Son of God without becoming poignantly aware of his own unworthiness and sin. We cannot think of Christ, let alone live with a consciousness of his abiding presence, without judging ourselves by his life and teachings. Since this self-judgment is such an essential step in the process of Christian salvation, we need the services of the church, and periods of family and personal devotion as well, to help us keep the picture of Jesus vividly before our eyes, and to cause our conscience to be prodded into more frequent and more critical self-evaluation.

Yes, Christ is our Savior. But there is a necessary element of judgment involved in his salvation—and it must be self-judgment!



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III

On the other hand, when a man refuses to judge himself and repent, he does bring upon himself a stern, external judgment.

If a man fails to heed the advice of of his doctor, or unknowingly disobeys the laws of health, he brings sickness upon himself. It is none of the doctor's doing. It is the result of the man's own ignorance or obstinance. So it is in the moral realm. If we refuse to follow the teachings of Jesus, if we disobey the spiritual and moral laws of the universe, we automatically condemn ourselves, or others of our kind, to suffering, sometimes even to death.

The prophet Amos was probably the first individual in history to see clearly that when we violate the laws of God we inevitably bring condemnation upon ourselves. This shepherd-prophet discerned that ours is a moral universe, in which evil brings its own bitter fruit, and in which, by the very nature of things, "the wages of sin is death." "Can one plow the sea with oxen," he asks ironically, "that you turn justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood?" The obvious implication is that men can no more get away with unrighteous living than a farmer can drive his oxen upon the surface of the water. Elsewhere Amos likens a social order based upon injustice to a wall that is out of plumb—it takes no push from the outside to make it collapse; in the course of time it will topple over because of its own inherent defect and because nothing can stand up in defiance of the irresistible laws of the universe. Judgment, with Amos, is not a case of a touchy God wreaking vengeance upon those who chance to violate his pet decrees; it is the inevitable and unimpassioned consequence of man's failure to adapt his ways to the laws of the moral order.

If we turn again to the passage from which we took our text, we shall see Jesus giving voice to this same thought in the context. "If anyone hears my words and disregards them," he says, "it is not I that judge him. . . . [And yet] whoever rejects me and refuses to accept my teachings is not without his judge." In other words, Jesus seems to be saying that, while he has come to save men and nations and not to judge them, still, if they refuse to repent, they will bring a judgment upon themselves. We might say that Jesus, in this passage, washes his hands of responsibility for men's punishment. He has done his part; now, if they suffer because of sin, it is their own fault.

In view of this stern, impartial judgment to which all men and all social groups are subject, the wise man turns to Christ and his church for guidance into right and safe paths. And the church, in turn, in the spirit of Christ, seeks to show men the way that leads to life and to warn them of the dangers that beset their paths. It tries to teach them the lessons of history, warning them of the courses of action, both in individual conduct and in national policy, that always have, and presumably always will, lead to grief and disaster. The church, as an institution of salvation, attempts to save men and nations from running into destruction through ignorance of, or failure to abide by, the will of God as revealed in the experiences of the race and in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

IV

We have been saying, from the beginning of this message, that Christ is first and last a Savior, rather than a judge. But to be true to the record, we must mention that there was one type of situation in which Jesus, during his own ministry, did pass judgment upon men. That was where the sins of an individual or class were causing other people to suffer.

For example, Jesus executed judgment upon the money-changers, who were robbing pilgrims in the temple—not only robbing them, but also destroying for them the spiritual atmosphere that ought to prevail in a house of prayer. He vigorously denounced the scribes and Pharisees, whom he saw fastening a yoke of legalism upon the people—blind guides leading others astray. Similarly in a few other cases where one man's sin was

resulting in another's suffering, Jesus judged and condemned.

If Jesus were to return again, in our own day, "not to judge the world, but to save the world," would he not nevertheless find it necessary to assume the role of judge again, many times, simply as a means of furthering his primary work of salvation? Just because of his desire to save promising young men and helpless women and children from the hell of another war, Jesus would undoubtedly consider it necessary to denounce the nefarious activities of merchants of death and expose the smooth-sounding but deceitful arguments of the preparedness advocates. As a means of saving the youth of the land from the subtle temptations that are continually luring many of them into the clutches of the drink habit, Jesus would most certainly condemn the advertising and selling methods of those who are profiting so handsomely from the manufacture and sale of alcoholic poisons. Moreover, because of his love for the plundered poor and their undernourished children, and as a means of making possible for them also the more abundant life, Jesus would quite likely find himself judging and condemning the medieval labor policies of many an exploiting industrialist—if not the profit-system itself. In a world as complex and interdependent as ours is, where the sins of one man are visited not upon himself alone, nor even upon his children, but upon scores and even hundreds and thousands of other innocent bystanders, a Savior dare not stop with trying to bring large-scale social sinners to self-judgment—though he will try to do that first. But failing in that, he must proceed himself to pass judgment upon the guilty ones and try to persuade or compel them to mend their ways.

V

As an agent of Jesus Christ, the church is primarily an institution of salvation. But, in addition to its more positive and constructive work—proclaiming the good news of Christ's salvation, helping men judge themselves continually in the light of his example and teachings, and warning them of the inevitable consequences of violating the moral laws of the universe—the church must also be ready to judge some people if by so doing it may save others. The underprivileged and exploited groups in our day rightfully look to the church to save them from the many sufferings they needlessly bear as a result of the sins of others. For they remember that Jesus himself, because of his passionate desire to save men, judged those individuals and institutions that thwarted his efforts at salvation.

What, then—is Jesus judge or Savior? He is a judge, where the masses suffer for the sins of the few—and in such cases, he is unsparing in his denunciation. More significantly, however, because more in line with his fundamental purpose, he is a guide, eager to help us avoid the pitfalls along the way, and to keep us from bringing down upon our heads the inevitable consequences of sin; he is an example, stimulating self-judgment and repentance; he is a Savior, desirous of bestowing forgiveness and grace upon all those who will receive it.

Bombproof

A Communion Meditation

By David Nelson Beach

This is your hour, and the power of darkness. (Jesus to his captors in the garden) Luke 22:53

These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulations: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. (Jesus to his disciples) John 16:33.

THE mood of high elation and holy joy with which we usually approach the Lord's Supper sometimes blinds our eyes. And then we remember words like these two texts, and the dark and sinister silhouette of Good Friday cuts across our lack of insight.

It is to the insights of the shadows that I wish to turn our thoughts this morning.

The Arabs have a saying, "All sunshine makes a desert." We who have moved out from an era of drought and dustbowls know what they mean. We need clouds and moisture as well as sunlight to have a wholesome and vigorous life.

It is so in the climate of the spirit. If we are always bland, always confident, always optimistic, our spirits grow arid. This is not because optimism and faith are not good: one might as well argue that sunshine is not good. But blandness and easy confidence and shallow Pollyanna-ism are untrue to life. Quite literally we have to let sympathy shrink up and friendliness shrivel to keep such superficial confidence. And when compassion vanishes thus, we are all unwittingly selling our birthright for a mess of the pottage of cynicism.

There *is* evil in the world. "The power of darkness" exists. "God pays, but not every Saturday," the Spaniards say. And there are long eras between the Saturdays of judgment—eras when evil flourishes, and virtue suffers, and tribulations must be endured by the just and the generous.

YEARS THAT TRY MEN'S SOULS

Nineteen thirty-eight was not the first year that has tried men's souls. It may not be the last.

Nineteen thirty-eight had in it certain aspects which are new. Never before has it been possible for the airplane to transform cities into shambles so easily or so thoroughly. Never before have the 10 Downing Streets been so close in time and space to the Berchtesgadens. Never before has the English channel seemed quite so narrow a moat and even the great oceans merely broad lagoons. Never before have the pulsebeats of nations been amplified so loudly. Perhaps never before have the clouds been so world-wide and the shadows so terrifying.

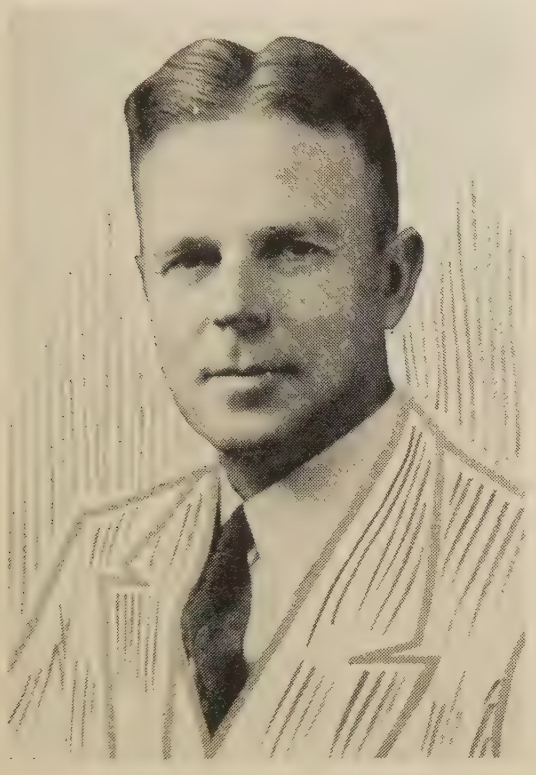
But many times ere now the hour of the power of darkness has struck. It did when Jesus was dragged out from the Garden of Gethsemane, and when the mobs have had their way with other men and women too good and too true to be comfortable conformists. It did when the Roman legions were recalled from England; when the barbarians sacked Rome; when the

Arabs came to Tours, and the Turks knocked at the gates of Vienna.

What may we do, then, when another zero hour of the power of darkness comes upon us?

There is only one answer: "These things have I spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulations: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Jesus spake these words across the table when his feast was first spread. Let us hear them again and again.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulations: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."



DAVID NELSON BEACH

The title of this meditation, "Bombproof," is indeed a singular one for a communion sermon. It seems too contemporary—but then our peace today, tomorrow and the day following must be contemporary. It has the weight of brutal terrorism about it—but even so was there no brutal terrorism when Jesus was scourged, when the nails were driven through his hands and feet, when he hung there with his life slowly dripping away? It suggests shadow and gloom—but was there no shadow of gloom when Christians had to worship in caves and catacombs, and when an informer's tattle could hale them away to torture and death?

I do not exaggerate in the least when I say that the bombproofs of tomorrow may be as necessary to the evolution of the Christian leaven as ever were the catacombs of yesterday.

Furthermore, if our peace as Christians is to be real, it must be lived heroically in the terms of tomorrow. We may not dictate what those terms shall be, when we live under the shadow of the power of darkness. If that power uses bombs, we must be able to withstand them.

Jesus bore in his own body the cruelty of his age. Shall we, his servants, put ourselves above our Lord? Quite literally, therefore, our peace next month or next year may have to be bombproof.

I do not say "bombproof" with even the least hint of hysteria. I am not spleeny; I am neither boastful nor fearful. Quite the opposite: I am only trying to be as calm and open-eyed as Jesus himself was. I would neither exaggerate nor minimize the power of darkness in the days ahead. I am completely certain that your faith and mine must be robust and sage and sure if we are to be equal to the testings of our times.

Let us find God in prayer as we have never done before.

The Candle of the Lord

By Carl H. Elmore

The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.
Man's conscience is the lamp of the Eternal. Proverbs 20:27.

WE have here two translations of one of the really great verses of the Bible. This divine pronouncement, as our fathers considered it, forever settled in their minds all problems connected with the difficult matter of conscience. "It is the voice of God in the soul of man"—that is what they taught us to say, that was what they believed implicitly, that was what had been handed over to them as an ancestral inheritance. How simple this whole business of right living was when one stood beneath the unchallenged authority of such a declaration! It is too much to say that our predecessors, even though classified as patriarchs and apostles, always lived blameless lives, but where they failed they would be the first to confess that the fault lay with them and not with the moral steering apparatus with which they were equipped. They knew well the direction in which they ought to travel, for they had, as they believed, an infallible compass at their command. They might flout that compass, but they did not deny it.

WHAT OUR GENERATION HAS THROWN AWAY

One of the most disturbing and disastrous things that has happened in the whole history of religion has been the loss in our times of public trust in that inner directing voice we call conscience. I do not believe that I exaggerate in the slightest when I make this statement. Think of it—millions, yes, hundreds of millions have steered their way across the sea of life, sure that they had a God-given device which would hold them to their course and guide them safely to port; and now carelessly, one might almost say flippantly, our generation has thrown away what has been

for ages one of man's most trusted, most cherished possessions.

Ask any of the psychoanalysts who have become the priests and prophets of our twentieth century life, What about the inner voice? and he will answer, "An echo, my dear sir, merely an echo of one's past, quite undependable and without authority of any kind." Tell the average young person on a college campus that he ought to obey his conscience, and the best you can hope for is a tolerant, half-amused smile at your quaint point of view. Advise any of these young mothers who are bringing up children so earnestly by the latest books on physical and mental hygiene, that conscience is far more important in the life of her son than the development of his libido, and she will be shocked at such ignorance on your part. Some of you will remember the letter of a high school boy published a few months ago in which he says that he has dismissed honesty from his scheme of living because honesty doesn't pay in the world as it stands today. We might as well make up our minds to it, conscience is definitely discredited as a human guide in these times. Our age is determining its conduct by other tests and methods.

Now if you ask why this astonishing change has occurred, there is an answer. Take these words from a writer of wide reputation: "Conscience is one of the most appalling scourges of mankind. It can attach itself to mint and anise and cummin until its wretched possessor is half-insane with scrupulosity about things that do not matter. It can swing to the negative and inhibit and repress one who might be happily creative, until he is actually in prison within himself. It can sanction absurd or cruel customs. It can become hypersensitive, in fact get completely out of hand and make a man so needlessly remorseful that unless something can be done for his haunted soul he will land under psychiatric care."

"Every physician," writes one medical man, "who has much to do with nervous disorders and emotional troubles, comes to realize that thousands of well meaning individuals are suffering from mental torture and various nervous disorders as the result of overworking the conscience."

THE EVIDENCE ON THE OTHER SIDE

That is essentially one side of the evidence on which our age has dethroned conscience as the supreme arbiter of human conduct. Conscience has quite obviously made mistakes, no one can deny that. It does not always direct intelligently, and actually at times it does more harm than good. But nonetheless to my mind Dr. Buttrick very successfully answers such charges when he says: "It is true that conscience has made mistakes, but people who have turned their backs upon it have been far more wrong in their choices and decisions." It may not be an infallible guide, but humanity has yet to find anything better to which it can entrust its fate.

There is a list as long as your arm of mental diseases any or all of which may descend upon our central nervous system at any time. The word of a man under the influence of many of these maladies cannot for a moment be trusted; he may even take a fiendish delight in bringing any questioner to disaster. But when you are on a lonesome road or in a great city, you don't hesitate to follow the direction of the first man you meet. The fact that he can contract diseases which would render him irresponsible or even dangerous does not cause you to refuse his help. More than that, any business man in this church, if he wanted to employ an assistant to handle his money, would not hesitate for an instant between one who obeyed his conscience and one who took it as a negligible quantity. There is not a parent here who would want a child taught by a teacher who habitually ignored the voice that speaks within. There is not a young woman with any understanding of what she was doing who would even consider for her life-long companion a man who played fast and loose with this "I ought" which challenges his moral deeps.

EMERGING FROM THE MIRE

Another factor in the discrediting of conscience is modern scientific analysis and investigation. Scientists tell us that they have tracked this matter to its source and that its origin, to say the least, does not inspire confidence in its authority. They say it began in the human mind as a fear of tribal taboos, it is associated with totem poles and fetishes and all the rigmarole of witch-doctors in savage tribes. This inward voice in those days, they tell us, was merely self-preservation uttering a warning cry whenever the individual momentarily forgot the dangers with which a credulous religion and a superstitious society surrounded him. It could not have come from God, they infer, because it can be clearly traced to its beginnings in man's own childish reaction toward a barbaric environment.

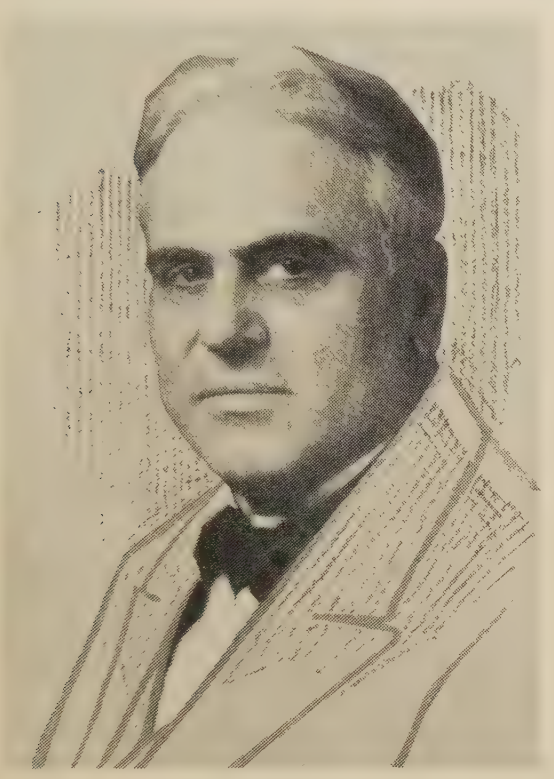
But surely the mere fact that this attribute of ours may be found emerging from disappointingly crude and primitive sources does not invalidate or even limit its power and authority. Even the high and mighty science itself that rules our age with a lordly insolence, some few centuries ago kept company with charlatans and magicians; it had no stock in trade then beyond the charms and hocus-pocus of the wizard's cabinet. Shall I then declare that science is not to be trusted, that it cannot possibly lead the march of progress because it crawled up into human consciousness, so to speak, through the trapdoor of a false magic? Certainly not. Evolutionists assure us that man, in his long struggle upward, was once the own brother of the clam, the turtle and the gibbering ape; but shall we conclude, because we began in the world in a small way, that all our dreams of the millennium are spurious? Must we abandon the conviction that we are made in the image of God because we once were naked cannibals? Not for a moment.

Psychologists declare again that all poetry and art and music come without any question from the sex urge in our nature, that a sexless humanity would be destitute of the fine arts. That may be so; but when I stand uplifted before the white loveliness of the

Victory of Samothrace, when I am stirred out of myself by the haunting charm of Debussy's "Clair de Lune," when all that is best in me responds to Wordsworth as he sings:

> My heart leaps up when I behold
> A rainbow in the sky.
> So was it when my life began,
> So is it now I am a man;
> So be it when I shall grow old,
> Or let me die!—

shall I say such things cannot be God-inspired because they are grounded in humanity's most primitive instinct? I will not believe so. Why, even the ancient



CARL H. ELMORE

Hebrews knew that the Almighty full often comes into this world through humble and even dubious portals. Read their old records and see how profoundly convinced they were that their national destiny was revealed to them in a blazing desert thorn bush and that once at least a message from the Most High that changed their history came to the prophet through the ass he rode. Can we as Christians question for an instant that God uses the most ordinary and commonplace things through which to work, when we remember that he revealed himself to us through a workman's baby born in a cowshed?

THE SALT-MARSH AND THE OCEAN

No, my friends, conscience may have sprung from lowly origins, it may even in its beginnings be associated with human mistakes and superstitions, but we completely turn our back upon history when we declare that for that reason God cannot and does not use it to carry his will to men. Go down into the salt marshes in an argumentative mood. Examine any little puddle there. Say if you will, This cannot come from the ocean—it is as shallow as a bird's bath, it is as calm as a mirror, it is choked with mud and the land grime; it can have nothing to do with the wind-swept infinities out yonder. But when you have argued yourself hoarse, and the right moment comes, you need but dip a finger into that puddle to feel the pulsing pressure of the incoming tide. So it is with conscience; it may contain much of ignorance and be tangled with worldly forces and influences, but pulsing through, somehow, comes to us the voice of the Infinite.

But let us go even further than this. Let us meet him halfway who says that conscience has nothing to do with God, that it is only the past welling up within us. Even at that, it is the accumulated wisdom, the best judgment of an actual experience inherited or acquired at first hand. Does he not declare himself a fool who, standing all alone with a difficult choice to make, refuses to listen respectfully to whatever experience has to say to him? Grant that we cannot follow Rufus Jones when he exclaims: "The elemental spiritual core in us which we call conscience can come from nowhere but from a deeply spiritual influence with which we have relations. It is an august authoritative loyalty of the soul to a God who transcends good and who will not allow us to substitute prudence for intrinsic goodness." Even if we must agree with that distinguished psychologist who says that conscience is the voice of our suppressed good, what of it? If it have no origin outside of self, if it is our own voice that we hear calling to us, still it is our best self that so commands us, the part of us that stands for ideals, that girds itself to face life nobly, that stretches out a hand toward God; and when I am caught in the grip of appetites, when the clamor of the flesh rings in my ears, there is an authority about the summons of my best which I dispute or refuse at my own peril.

ALTERNATIVES TO CONSCIENCE

Right at this point we may properly ask what are the alternatives to conscience as a guiding force in human life. As far as our age is concerned, one of these alternatives is public opinion. The attitude, the behavior, the point of view which obtains in the community about us or in the social class to which we belong—this is the determining authority quite widely recognized among us. What is the code of my associates in this matter? What are other parents doing about their children? Is this generally done or not? Will I be criticized or ostracized if I take this stand?

The desire to be correct instead of the determination to be right is a dangerous shift in emphasis. We have only to study the history of our race to realize that the majority has never yet been right on any vital world-changing issue. New aspects of truth are always championed by the minority. Certainly anyone who has lived in a southern town and seen a neighborhood composed of sober, conservative, churchgoing people transformed overnight into a screaming mob ravening for the life

of some poor ignorant half-wit who committed a crime, would hesitate for a long time to accept the verdict of the crowd as the guiding force in his life. Jesus was not thinking primarily of heaven when he said, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be that go in thereat"; he was declaring with all the power he could muster that a man takes his life in his hands when he follows the majority in those high matters which concern his soul.

Another widely employed alternative to conscience is feeling. In *Pamela's Daughters,* a book which every parent of daughters could read to his profit, the author quotes from a letter written by Robert Palfrey: "I think it most certain that in the immediate future, feeling will be taken more and more for a guide in the conflicts that arise between our own inclination and tradition." This prophecy has already come true, if we can trust Dr. Stearns of Andover, whose intimate association with the best of our American home life for three generations ought to qualify him to speak. In characterizing the philosophy which colors our modern thinking, he says: "It asks us to follow only our natural desires and inclinations, to shun that which is hard and disagreeable, to abandon coercion and restraint, taboo discipline, ignore our responsibilities to others. In fact it asks us in plain defiance of the established laws under which human development and the welfare of society are alone possible, to center our thoughts and emotions on self only and give full rein to every passing whim and desire for self-indulgence which caters to our personal pleasure."

WANDERING IN A MORAL HAZE

Conceding that the good doctor may have worn his blue glasses when he penned these conclusions, can't we see in our own lives and the lives of our friends and neighbors enough to make us feel that the drive of the words is at least in the right direction? To submit our actions to the domination of feeling—could anything be a more certain invitation to disaster? Heaven pity the man who throws away his compass when he launches out to sea! But even heaven must be at a loss to diagnose the mental reactions of the mariner who not only gets rid of his compass but leaves his vessel to be blown hither and yon by every passing wind and still hopes some day to reach his destination.

But all this is no longer theory. We have been employing these modern substitutes for conscience, public opinion and feeling, long enough to observe what effects they produce. Let me not sit in judgment on the moral situation which surrounds us; take these words from Walter Lippmann: "Underlying the disorder in the outer world there is a disorder in the spirit of man. Where there is no vision the people perish. Only the consciousness of a purpose that is mightier than any man and worthy of all men can fortify and inspirit and compose the souls of men." Consider also this comment of Clarence Darrow, certainly in all things a realist: "If I were a young man with life ahead of me, I think I'd chuck it the way things are now. The odds are too great against you and anyway the world is all wrong nowadays." Discount by a full 90 per cent the observations of these present-day prophets, and the solemn fact remains that we are wandering today in a sort of moral haze. The clear-cut issues as our fathers saw them have dissolved into chaos. What is the right thing to do? How can I tell right from wrong? How often, inside and outside, one confronts these questions! It is the inevitable consequence of playing fast and loose with conscience. Our world, instead of being white and black, has become to our eyes a confused gray. But the world of reality, the world as God made it, is not gray—it is white on the one side and black on the other; right and wrong still hold in this universe. And for every concession we make to the wrong, we have to pay—pay full often a terrible price of blood and tears.

The way to the best, the trail up to the good, the joyous, the satisfying, is no easy path to find or to follow. Whether we can define conscience or not, mankind has never yet found a better guide along the road that leads to the realization of our hopes, than the inner voice. It may make mistakes, it may not possess the authority our fathers gave it, but it accomplishes results better than anything that man has yet found to take its place. Abbé Dimnet is right when he says: "No matter how cobwebbed our moral lantern, its little light is still steady. There burns within us, be it ever so dimly, a spiritual light which shows us a high way and a low. Though we may refuse to follow, we cannot escape the beam."

Summing up all we have tried to say here this morning, I do not know any better way to put it than in this dialogue in a modern home. The son speaks: "Dad, what is conscience?" The father answers: "Son, I don't know; but when that telephone rings, you take down the receiver."

The Might of the Mite

By Henry Hitt Crane

Verily I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than all they that are casting into the treasury: for they all did cast in of their superfluity: but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living. Mark 12:43,44.

MY subject is suggested by, and is strikingly suggestive of—Jesus. He was forever doing just that: revealing the might of the mite. He was continually picking out apparently unimportant incidents of life and by his singular emphasis disclosing their startling significance. A wee flower blooms modestly in the valley. Jesus sees it, points it out, and claims that it is more exquisitely arrayed than was the magnificent Solomon in his most sumptuous garb and glory. From the standpoint of beauty the loveliness of a mite of a lily is mightier than the lavishness of a lord. A tiny wounded winged thing flutters to the ground and limply hops away to hide in the cold embrace of death.

Jesus beholds it, and declares that the Infinite God who whirls the stupendous stars, notes concernedly the fallen bird. From the standpoint of the divine thought and care a mite of a sparrow is as mighty as a central sun. A widow shyly drops a half cent—all that she has—into the treasury of the church, while others contribute lavishly of their superfluity. Jesus discerns it, and proclaims that her pittance is greater than the gifts of all the others despite all their ostentatious magnificence. From the standpoint of genuine self-giving her mite is mightier than their much.

Jesus, you see, was essentially an artist. He discerned hidden values, unrecognized worth. Then by the magic

Henry Hitt Crane

of his touch he revealed them, set them forth in their proper place of prominence, portraying everything in perfect perspective. "Art," says Edward Howard Griggs, "is the adequate and harmonious expression and interpretation of some phase of man's life in true relation to the whole."

THE SUPREME ARTIST

We *need* artists, then. Real artists are utterly indispensable if we are ever to learn life's largest lessons; for they are our truest teachers in that they are forever attempting to maintain a proper perspective of values—taking any given phase of man's life and interpreting it "in true relation to the whole." Most of us get such warped opinions as to what is great and what is small, what is worth while and what is inconsequential, what is vital and what is trivial. The result is that life itself is twisted and deformed, and many of us become veritable moral monstrosities—overdeveloped in one aspect of existence, dwarfed and undernourished in another. Balance, proportion, perspective is lost—and life, of course, becomes meaningless.

Now Jesus, being the supreme Artist, is superlatively skilled in painting life's pictures, for he always maintains a true sense of proportion. That which is important is put in the foreground, the rest is allowed to furnish the background, or is left out altogether. The essentials, the really vital and significant issues, he chooses as the central and dominant features, and to these everything else is subordinated. Thus as we look at life through his eyes our perspective is righted, our sense of values made true.

Never to better advantage, perhaps, has our Master Artist revealed his skill than in this beautiful picture portraying, if you will, the might of the mite. A poor, humble, devout widow modestly makes her way to the treasury of the Temple. She sees the wealthy contributors take munificent sums from their opulent purses and either reverently, or proudly, or condescendingly deposit the same in the collection box. Quietly waiting until they have all passed and assuming that she is unobserved, she silently drops into the treasury two mites, an amount equivalent to half a cent—which was all she had; not simply all she had with her, but all she had anywhere—"even all her living." Then she turns and walks away—immortalized! For the eye of the Infinite Artist had seen, and the picture he painted has been preserved for all time, so that all ages might come to realize the might of that widow's mite.

A MATTER OF SOUL

Now there are not two, nor five, nor forty reasons why this mite should be so mighty; there is just one reason, namely, *it was all she had, and this she gave gladly, yet modestly, to the best she knew.* There's nothing mightier than that under high heaven! Jesus knew it. It was his highest hope to make the world know it. For only as he might be able to induce humanity "to go and do likewise" could they ever be saved.

"All that she had—given gladly—yet modestly—to the best she knew!" That was a tremendous thing to do! It always is! God couldn't help seeing such a significant deed—it was so mighty! It loomed large and lovely like a great white light on the dim horizon of a morally dark world. For this was no mere matter of money, it was a mighty matter of soul. What that widow gave was not a specified sum, but a sanctified self. The mite was but the symbol of the mightiest value ever created in all the universes—personality! This is the great truth that men are forever forgetting—but that God always remembers—that nothing is of such superlative worth as the soul of a man! This is the central meaning of the gospel, the fundamental message of Christianity.

> Were the whole realm of nature mine,
> That were a present far too small!
> Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my soul! . . .

That is the whole story, and perfectly told! My soul, your soul, is a greater and mightier thing than the whole realm of nature. Hence to gain the whole world

and lose a soul would be a poor bargain for God as well as for man.

THE ONLY THING THAT COUNTS

"All that she had." How mighty a gift it was! It didn't matter in the least whether it was a farthing or a fortune, just so it was—all that she had. How much money a man gives never matters—except to the muddled minds of men; it's how much he holds back that counts—with God. The value of a gift is never to be measured by the amount one gives, but by the amount one has left—if we would estimate according to the divine method. "And there came a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which makes a farthing." But that was a mighty gift, because she "did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

And Jesus watched her—and with vast approval—as she cast in two mites—all that she had, even all her living. I wonder that he didn't restrain her, or at least suggest that she keep one mite for herself. Surely the woman had to live, hadn't she? No matter how pious a person may be, there's no sense in giving everything to the church—and starving to death. If only a few, good, practical, solicitous, feet-on-the-ground brethren had been on hand they might have advised the sister—and helped her to keep at least half her capital for herself, so that she might "live" (and, incidentally, so that they might feel the more justified in keeping half their capital so that they might live—with easier consciences). But only Jesus was there, and the disciples whom he called unto himself. And he let her alone, as she gave all that she had, even all her living. Worse than that, he openly approved her act.

Why? Because he wanted her to starve? Oh, no indeed! Because he wanted her to live! Jesus knew that the Way of Life was the way of complete self-giving. Jesus knew that there was meat to eat that the body knew nothing of, but for which the soul so often starved. Jesus knew that the mite she might have kept was the mite that meant the most; it meant utter giving of the self—which is the only giving that completely counts. As he watched her he may even have been silently saying to himself something to the effect that she that would have her life shall lose it, but she that would lose her life for his sake, shall save it.

INSTEAD OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE

Would God this widow's name were legion! Would that she were multiplied into a multitude! What mighty movements would then be astir throughout the land! What spiritual resources would be released! No wonder the churches are so poverty-stricken spiritually! Men are forever casting in "of their superfluity"—which means that it costs them very little, if any, self-giving. They are so frightfully afraid to give to God that last mite of money and of manhood, which alone means moral and spiritual might. It is not foolishness, but faith that is evidenced by giving all that you have to the cause of righteousness—faith, which means "life in scorn of consequence."

But the picture is not completely painted until the background is all put in, and the background of this painting is particularly important. The day the incident of the text occurred Jesus had come into the temple to worship. His heart was hungry for closer communion with his Father, and he had doubtless instinctively turned to the House of God for this spiritual refreshment. Instead, however, of finding the church to be a place of power because of the Divine Presence, it had been transformed into a trap of treachery by the devilish device of men. Where people should have come together for mutual help and betterment, there gathered unscrupulous, but respectable, hypocrites who sought to ruin and destroy any who might curtail their unrighteous prerogatives. So when Jesus came to worship, he was compelled to meet men who were determined to destroy him. All sorts of captious questions were put to him. The chief priests and the scribes challenged his authority to help or heal, to teach or preach. The Herodians put to him a clever catch question which might make him appear to be disloyal either to his God or to his government. The Sadducees attempted to embarrass him by a foolish query concerning the resurrection. From all these traps he skilfully extricated himself, to be sure, but the spirit of the Temple had been destroyed by the mean, petty, vicious attitude of the leading members of the institution. So that as he emerged from the profaned place of prayer he sternly said: "Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and to have salutations in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts; they that devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers; these shall receive greater condemnation."

RELIGION'S LOST HEART

But before Jesus left the Temple one came evidently perplexed and very much in earnest. Confused by the many requirements and ceremonial obligations, troubled by the innumerable rules and ritualistic regulations, he asked, "What is the fundamental requirement?" And Jesus readily returned that matchless answer which summed up all the law and prophets and revealed the supreme significance of the church: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength; and thy neighbor as thyself!" This was the great ideal the Temple at its best really stood for; but how far short it had fallen; how frightfully corrupt it had become!

It was against such a background, then, that Jesus painted the picture of the poor, pious widow casting her two mites into the treasury. All that she had she gave to that very Temple which the chief priests and scribes had so offensively tainted and marred. And Jesus watched her do it—and approved! But how could he? Why did he not rush over to the treasury, as soon as he had divined her purpose, and with a fine show of righteous indignation, declare: "Just a moment, my good woman. Do you understand what you are doing? Do you know that there are a whole host of hypocrites in that church? Do you realize that there are many unscrupulous men who are in control of that

institution, and that they spend your hard earned money unwisely, if not dishonestly? If I were you I certainly should not give them a single mite until they had cleaned the place up and put it all on a good business basis."

WHY JESUS APPROVED

Why did he not do that? Had he been like some men I know he would have felt it his duty to do that very thing. But Jesus watched the widow give her all —and commended her. And for two very good reasons, I think. In the first place, he knew that with all its faults, with all its erring members, the Temple was the best human institution that there was. Out of it there flowed a stream of life-giving water which, though sometimes muddied considerably, yet gave fertility to the soil all about it. It represented the fairest dreams, the highest ideals, the noblest aspirations of a great race. It was the embodiment of the best that the majority ever thought of. With all its corruptions and misdeeds it yet stood for the idea of God. When the widow cast in her mites, therefore, she was giving her all to the best that she knew—and that meant infinitely much to *her!*

But in the second place, it meant infinitely much to the Temple, too; not that it added very materially to the physical funds of the treasury, but that it contributed most effectively to the spiritual force of its altar. "Verily I say unto you, This poor widow hath cast in more than they all!" More what? Not more money, to be sure, but more love, more devotion, more loyalty, more integrity, more idealism, more self-sacrifice! And that is what redeems any institution, ultimately! That is what overcomes every evil and establishes righteousness in the end. That is what saves the world. The widow's mite was mighty because it stood for soul. She gave more than they all, because she gave *herself!*

Mother . . . A Portrait

HER hands have much
Of Christ-like touch.

Her smile on one
Is benison.

Her silver hair,
A halo rare.

Her step, a sound
On Holy ground.

Her dear face lined,
But kind—kind.

Of women, best
And loveliest.

ETHEL ROMIG FULLER.

Thanksliving

WERE thanks with every gift expressed,
Each day would be Thanksgiving;
Were gratitude its very best,
Each life would be thanksliving.

CHAUNCEY R. PIETY.

A Pastoral Prayer

By Hobart D. McKeehan

ETERNAL Spirit, as the birds of the air seek the garden within the desert, as mountain streams seek their home in the midst of the sea, even so do we seek our rest and strength and peace in Thee. Thou hast made us for Thyself and from generation to generation Thy love endures. The light of Thy countenance fails not and the truth which Thou wouldst reveal to seeking children comes to them with the newness of each day. Thou hast set eternity within our hearts; and though we walk in paths of weakness and of shadow, yet we dream of a life which is spiritually triumphant and we look for a city which hath foundations.

Eternal Father, Thou art holy love. Help us, we beseech Thee, to achieve a vision of fellowship and to enjoy the fellowship of vision. Teach us to understand that Thou hast need of our frail lives to fulfill Thy purpose of righteousness, beauty and grace, even as we need Thee to realize the life eternal within the feverish movement of our mortal years. Especially do we pray Thee to lift and lead and sanctify our homes. Thou hast set the solitary within families and Thy blessed Son, our Savior, didst break the bread of life in the homes of his friends. Help us, O Infinite Father, to restore the fallen altars by our hearthstones and grant that the Presence of the Unseen Guest may lift the family circle into one unclouded and unbroken communion with Thee. May the integrity and fidelity of fathers, mothers and children find an emblem in the everlasting hills amid which our homes are built. May our homes, even now, be prophetic of those which Thou hast prepared for us in the City on the Hill.

Eternal Love, dwell within us with the spirit of power and the deep and certain peace of a victorious faith. Help us to overcome all perplexity of direction, all confusion of purpose, all haunting sin and failure. Grant unto us the glory of the lighted mind, the desire to apprehend and to share the truth, and the felicity which cometh only to those who have seen Thee in the face of Jesus Christ. And meanwhile, as we seek the larger good of humankind—peace, justice and enlightenment—may our homes afford us our training schools in character, moral beauty and sacrificial love. In the Spirit's name we ask it. Amen.

A Million Women Can't Be Wrong!

By Robert Cashman

I HAVE been converted! For years I have talked against the financial methods used by the women of the church for the raising of their budgets, but I have changed my mind.

My prejudice reached a climax recently when my wife was made chairman of a circle. One of her first duties was to give a luncheon to her group at our home. Being interested, I furnished flowers costing two dollars. Refreshments were provided for a like amount. Fourteen guests were present at twenty-five cents each. My wife also paid twenty-five cents. Deducting our own expenses, the net loss was fifty cents. Surely, I thought, there must be better ways than this to raise money for the church.

A few days later I found myself acting as chauffeur for the distribution of motion picture tickets to the members of "our" circle, from which 40 per cent was to be received on sales, as profit. This took half a day and two gallons of gasoline. Then my wife spent two afternoons selling her share of tickets to her neighbors, many of whom returned later to solicit us for their projects. Twenty telephone calls were necessary for check-up purposes, and finally, because of my wife's illness, I spent an evening at the church, meeting the circle members, to turn in the cash and unsold tickets. The receipts were $23.50, of which the circle profit was $9.40. If the movie had been worthy of the church, I might have felt better than I did about it, but my conscience began to ask me if this method of circle financing were really good for the church. I should have preferred to give ten dollars extra to the budget to save the effort and discouragements involved. I suggested this to my wife, but she replied, "That isn't the way they do it!"

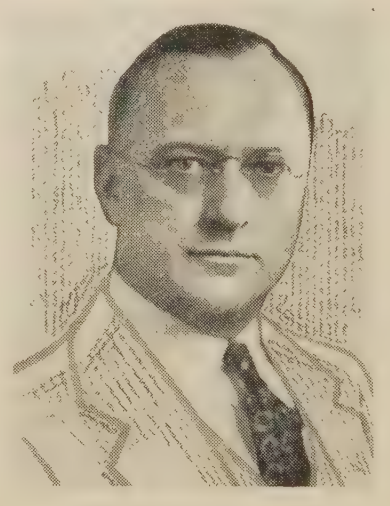
• *What a Questionnaire Brought Forth*

I then decided that this subject was of more than local interest, and that before giving any more advice I had better find out what others were doing, and why. So I issued a questionnaire. It went widely over the country, to city and rural churches large and small, and to ministers, chairmen of women's groups, and to leaders of individual circles. The response was prompt and encouraging.

"What is the name of your organization?" was my first question. I was surprised at the variety which included: Woman's Association, Circle, Guild, League, Society, Union, Organization, Federation, Club, Fellowship, Auxiliary, Council, and Missionary Union; Ladies' Aid, Social Circle, and Benevolent Society; also Add-a-Friend Society, Federated Circle, and United Workers' Society.

The second query was concerning the size of the organizations, and the number of circles (or units) in each. The membership varied from 15 to 400, with from one to fifteen units each. The average enrollment of each unit was thirty.

"Is your program made a year ahead?" Two-thirds answered yes; one-third, no. About half print or mimeograph their programs for distribution.



Robert Cashman

• *How the Money Is Raised*

"Budget of organization?" From $100 annually to $5,650, an average of five dollars per member. The largest budget listed was raised entirely by voluntary contributions.

"Is the organization budget apportioned to circles?" Two-thirds, yes; one-third, no. A part of most budgets is apportioned, and the remainder is raised by special gifts or projects, in ways that suit the groups.

"Aside from gifts and dues, how is the money raised by your organization?" The answers are listed in the order of their popularity:

Serving luncheons and dinners, many of which are for groups outside the church, such as civic and business clubs.

Food (bake) sales.

Socials.

Sale of articles, such as potted plants, candy, soap, kitchen gadgets, quilts, aprons, dish-cloths, rag-rugs, paper napkins and cups; some of these items being made by the women themselves.

Rummage sales—mentioned as "very profitable."

Silver and musical teas.

Bazaars. "We give up our bazaars every so often," according to several, "but return to them after two or three years, because they have proved to be the best money-raisers."

Card parties. "The church is not the only organization promoting bridge parties. The Woman's Club, the P. T. A., the Scout mothers and all the rest are doing it. Some of our circle members have been to at least ten card parties promoted by their circle at fifty cents each, and they 'play for blood' and have a good time, but you could not get them to make an extra gift of $5 each to the church. They are trying to win the grand prize of $10."

Pageants, plays and entertainments, with admission charge or offering.

Educational lectures and book reviews, with season tickets and single admission charge.

Benefit dances and shows.

Tours of commercial houses, with charge.

Style shows.

Commercial demonstrations, for which the business representative pays ten cents to each member present for listening.

Selling tickets of admission to motion picture houses, on commission.

Church fairs, festivals and antique exhibits.

Sale of books and magazine subscriptions.

Publication and sale of cook-books.

Making and selling mince-meat and other foods.

Roasting and selling peanuts.

Distributing coin boxes and dime strips.

• *Are Better Methods Desired?*

"Are you satisfied with these methods?" was my next question. Two-thirds replied no; one-third, yes. Among the negative answers: "Too much work for the profit represented. We should have greater returns for the energy expended." "Our circles are too preoccupied with money-raising schemes to be of any real help to the church." "Our strength should be conserved for the spiritual program." The affirmatives: "What better ways

can you suggest?" "We believe our plans are good for a small community." "We are rewarded by the sociability."

"Can you offer suggestions for improvement of these methods?" To this question there were scarcely any answers. "You tell us," they responded. Some said, "Secure gifts and pledges only"; others, "Give all to the unified budget of the church, and include the women's needs in the total program"; "teach and practice stewardship"; "all group projects should have an educational or spiritual value—as book reviews, forums, study classes, religious dramas, pageantry, and missions"; "a business-like, planned program published in advance would save much grief." The present methods are needed, some believe, because they enable many to serve who cannot give. The Marthas enjoy working with their hands, and their service should be recognized as a labor of love. Some like to help in kitchens, but could not participate in group discussions.

And on the other hand: "Many of our women are not members of the church. Therefore they are interested only in our group projects." "The social contacts of our programs bring new members to the church. Project activities weave them into the congregational fabric." "It is more fun to play for money than for education, for there is a sense of satisfaction in definite achievements."

• *Suggestions for The Future*

"What suggestions would you make to young ministers and newly elected chairmen of Women's Organizations?" was my final question.

To ministers:

Don't interfere with the women's association, or try to reorganize it. Most of the leaders are intelligent and capable. Their judgment should be trusted. Counsel may be offered, when requested.

Promote outstanding women to the larger responsibilities of the church.

Don't be afraid to give a little praise and appreciation when work is well done.

Suggest worthy projects, such as: Replacement of communion set and offering plates; purchase of needed equipment for the chancel and the altar; new Bible, prayer books and hymn books, electric clocks; drapes and hangings, furniture for the church parlor; robes for the children's choir and the confirmation class; baskets for orphanages; flowers and decorations for the church, including such special occasions as Christmas and Easter; and cooperation with community agencies for social service.

To women:

Reduce the number of "money-raising stunts."

Break up the cliques, by interchanging members of the circles, keeping in mind the age groups and the geographical areas. Some members have been in the same units for twenty-five years.

Conduct no lotteries, raffles or games of chance.

Have inspiring devotional program at beginning of every session.

A majority of non-church members lowers the spiritual power of the group.

Make all activities tend toward the common goal of the church.

Records should be accurate and complete; financial accounts should be audited.

Social activities should include the entire church.

The best friend of a president is the past-president; it is well to have the vice-president succeed the president.

Become familiar with parliamentary law if you would have poise, smoothness and security in presiding at meetings.

Do not compete with local business interests.

Strong leaders attract followers, but those who are mediocre or inefficient tend to create cliques and quarrels.

Mite boxes produce pennies instead of dollars.

• *The Women Speak Their Minds*

"Your questions about financing women's work are out of order," said one minister's wife. "They should deal instead with financing the church through women's work. The women spend mighty little for their own pleasure or instruction."

"All credit is due our small rural churches whose Ladies' Aids and Sunday schools have kept the spark of hope alive when the men showed little interest. They have paid the pastor's salary and current expenses, without the help of educational material. Bazaars and dinners may be our chief resources, but at least they are honest."

"Theoretically, it would be much better to raise all the money by personal gifts. In the long run it would not cost the individual any more than now, but theory often breaks down. One of our churches discontinued all commercial enterprises. The minister testified that they had more money than ever; but the social contacts and fellowship were gone. Some people like to worship, or to teach, but others receive the same inspiration by service through physical work. And they are good people, too. Sometimes around a quilt or a kitchen stove, there are opportunities of reaching people's hearts that can never be touched by the pulpit-pew relationship."

"There may be better ways than ours, but we have such good times together getting ready for dinners and other special occasions. We have that delightful fellowship that we all need. Would you get acquainted with a stranger? Then peel potatoes or string beans with her in the church kitchen, and before you know it, you are friends."

"The lack of good organization is the outstanding reason why so many women's church groups drag along listlessly, with little pleasure, and with scarcely any help to the church. If each group had not only a definite budget, but a year's program outlined and published in advance, so that every member could look ahead, a more concerted effort would be made to achieve the goals. With fewer circles, the strength of numbers would give impetus to programs and projects now lacking in the smaller divisions. Friendliness toward strangers, an appeal to the charity and the nobility of the workers, a clearly presented program, and a public recognition of tasks well done, would produce enthusiastic members, and bring good success to the church."

• *Present Methods Are Good*

I have been surprised to find that the women's programs are similar throughout America. A hundred years of education by trial and error, by conferences and conventions, and by denominational promotion have resulted in our present structure which reaches from rural to city church without regard to denominations or geographical areas.

My conclusion, therefore, is that the work of our women's organizations is good. Surely the women love the church, and carry its interests in their hearts, at least as conscientiously and as enthusiastically as the men. Their motives and their ideals are beyond reproach. I really believe, then, that we can well afford to trust our mothers, wives, sisters and daughters to organize, promote and administer their own work with as much satisfaction and efficiency as they could find under the guidance and direction of the men. Most of it is planned for our welfare anyhow. By their faithfulness the women have moved mountains of difficulty in solving the problems of the church. They deserve a vote of praise and sincere appreciation, which is hereby publicly given.

I have been converted! A million women can't be wrong!

Coming!
In October
United Church of Canada
Number

Who's Who in This Issue

AMONG preachers in college communities, Rev. ALFRED W. SWAN of the First Congregational Church, Madison, Wis., has come to occupy an outstanding position. Every Sunday during the academic year Dr. Swan's church, which stands on the edge of the campus of the University of Wisconsin, is crowded with students. Dr. Swan was ordained in 1920, and held pastorates in Marion, Ohio, and Greeley, Colo., before coming to Madison. He is a member of the National Religion and Labor Foundation, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the American Legion and is on the board of the Council for Social Action of the Congregational and Christian Churches.

Rev. CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY, *minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.,* scarcely needs an introduction to readers of the *Pulpit*. A former moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., Dr. Macartney is known as a leader of the evangelical forces in that great denomination.

No more distinctive "downtown" ministry is being carried on in America today than that of the Rev. George Mecklenburg at the Wesley Methodist Church, Minneapolis, Minn. Dr. Mecklenburg has led this congregation, one of the largest in Methodism, since 1928. Before that he held pastorates in Massachusetts and Montana, and was field secretary for the Methodist Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals.

Rev. HAROLD L. LUNGER *has recently* come to the pulpit of the Austin Boulevard Christian Church, Oak Park, Ill., after serving churches in Akron, Ohio, West Haven, Conn., and directing traveling seminars for the National Religion and Labor Foundation.

Minneapolis has two representatives in the *Pulpit* this month, the second being the minister of the Plymouth Congregational Church, Rev. DAVID NELSON BEACH.

Rev. CARL H. ELMORE, *minister of the* First Presbyterian Church, Englewood, N. J., after graduating from Union Theological Seminary took postgraduate work in Edinburgh and at Marburg and Berlin, Germany. He has held only one other pastorate, at the Congregational Church in Briarcliff Manor, N. Y., where he served from 1908 to 1920.

Rev. HENRY HITT CRANE, *after a long* pastorate in Scranton, Pa., last year came to the famous pulpit of the Central Methodist Church, Detroit, which had been made vacant by the death of Dr. Frederick B. Fisher.

Rev. HOBART D. MCKEEHAN *is the minister of the Abbey Reformed Church, Huntington, Pa.*

ROBERT CASHMAN, *business manager of* the Chicago Theological Seminary, is the author of *The Business Administration of a Church* in the Ministers' Professional Library.

Titles and Texts

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

MILTON C. FROYD, Bushwick Ave. Baptist, Brooklyn, N. Y. "Spiritual Lockjaw." Luke 1:20—"Behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak . . . because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in this season."

HOMER C. CRISMAN, Methodist, Douglas, Wyo. "Let Us Make Us a Name." Gen. 11:4—"And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and tower, whose top shall reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

MILTON R. SCHROEDER, Fleischmann Memorial Baptist, Philadelphia. "Watch Your Step." Eph. 5:15, 16—"Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time. . . ."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .
Title of Sermon

. . . . . .
Text used (write out the text)

. . . . . .
Name of minister

. . . . . .
Name of church

. . . . . .
Address

JOSEPH M. GARRISON, First Presbyterian, Columbia, Mo. "Perils of Education." (Sermon for young people.) I Kings 19:13—"What doest thou here?"

ALEXANDER MACCOLL, Second Presbyterian, Philadelphia. "The Poor in Spirit: Christ's First Lesson in Happiness." Matt. 5:1-3—"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

THOMAS F. GALLAHER, Oak Cliff Presbyterian, Dallas, Tex. "A Telltake Companionship." Acts 4:13b—"They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."

BENJAMIN F. ROOT, St. Andrew's Episcopal, Waverly, Ia. "A Spiritual Alarm Clock." Eph. 5:14—"Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee."

CHARLES R. HODGES, Old Stone Church (Congregational), Willsboro, N. Y. "The Lord's Unfinished Business." Acts 1:1—"The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach . . ."

ROY J. SCHRAMM, Broadview Community, Hartford, Conn. "Grown-Up Christians." Eph. 4:14—"That we henceforth be no longer children, tossed to and fro, and carried about."

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE NEUTRALITY LAW will not be repealed at this session of Congress. President Roosevelt finally accepted the situation as it was indicated to him by the leaders of his own and the Republican parties, and decided not to push the issue to the floor of the Senate. We may expect a lively popular discussion of the issue from now on until Congress reconvenes next January. The neutrality law is not fully satisfactory even to those who oppose its repeal. Its operation is inconsistent with the international sentiments of most Americans. But the vital matter in the issue of repeal is not a simple question involving only American sympathies. The real issue is hidden under the misnomer by which the law is entitled. It is not a "neutrality" law at all, and was not primarily motivated at the time of its adoption by the neutrality principle. It was adopted to preclude this country's being dragged into war as the result of a war boom in business. It was a national act of economic self-denial in the interest of (1) keeping our economic system sound, and (2) preserving our freedom of action either to remain neutral in the event of war or to take sides on the objective merits of the situation. If we look deep enough into the agitation for repeal we shall find that it is not being fostered by sentimentalists alone but by those who have an economic stake in inflating American industrial activities by selling to those nations which have the money to buy and the ships to transport the "arms, munitions and implements of war" manufactured here.

"Neutrality" Repeal Goes to the People

The Book of the Month

CHRISTENDOM, AN ECUMENICAL REVIEW. *Summer number, 1939. H. Paul Douglass, editor. 297 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y. $3.00 a year, $1.00 a copy.*

MY favorite quarterly magazine is *Christendom.* When it makes its appearance I read it from cover to cover. If I am going on a trip I take it with me, and while it lies on my desk with any part unread I find difficulty in going on with my routine work. Why do I like it so much? Not because I was once its editor, but because it deals with the most vital matters which concern us as Christians. It is the organ of the great Christian rapprochement at which the best minds of all the churches throughout the world are now working. It is no headquarters organ, but the free and open medium of the most comprehensive idea which the modern church entertains. I have not space, of course, to give the contents of any single article, but the titles and authors are suggestive: "Fragment of Autobiography," by A. J. Muste, a socialist who has found something in Christianity which economic socialism lacks. "The Worship of the Reformed Churches," by James S. Dauerty, containing rich samples of the Reformed liturgy. Two articles on the recent Methodist reunion, one by Bishop McConnell, another by President Umphrey Lee. "Political Theology in Europe," by Adolf Keller. "A Federal Plan of Unity," by William M. Washington. "The Supernatural Is Natural," by Ralph W. Nelson. A timely article on home missions, by Hermann N. Morse, and an article on "Eastern Orthodox Churches in the United States," by W. G. Tinckom-Fernandez. Fifty pages of book reviews by writers in every case whose opinions I wish to know. The novels of the quarter reviewed by Professor John C. Schroeder, and a list of one hundred books of the quarter, each one characterized briefly by the editor.

A Thought for the Month

THE MORE I study the mind of Paul, the more profoundly do I stand in awe of it. Some have been so impressed with its daring originality that they have attributed to Paul rather than to Jesus the founding of the Christian faith. My study, on the contrary, leaves me impressed with the striking affinity between Paul's mind and that of his Master. There would have been no Paul had there been no Jesus. He seemed to understand Jesus better than the original disciples understood him. Two all-important principles in Jesus' thought had been completely missed by the disciples who had enjoyed personal companionship with him. These Paul grasped with vigor. One was the principle of utter emancipation from the racialism and nationalism of Israel. He universalized Christianity, against much resistance from his fellow apostles. Paul's other insight was his deeper understanding of the death of Jesus. For the other apostles the resurrection had eclipsed the crucifixion—wiped it out, so to speak. But Paul saw the cross and the open tomb together, and he gloried in the one no less than in the other. In imagination, he must have lingered long in the Upper Room, for he caught the meaning of Jesus' words and actions there as the disciples who were actually present had failed to do. The whole purpose of Jesus on that night was to make his death integral to the life of the little community which he had formed about himself. Paul saw this, and from it, together with the fact of the resurrection, thought his way into the profound conception of the church as the living Body of the Risen Christ. He thus freed the Christian church from the Jewish messianism in which the other apostles had clothed their faith, and reclothed it in the universal concept of the Incarnation. By so doing he did not transcend Jesus; he penetrated to Jesus' deepest thought.

Paul and Jesus

Charles Clayton Morrison

Read these books—make your summer count!

PATTON: Carl S.

The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons

"A book of prime assistance to the preacher by one of America's most distinguished teachers of homiletics." *Zion's Herald.*
"Says many new things on the subject of preaching and many old things in new and fascinating ways." *Christian-Evangelist.* **$2.00**

LUCCOCK: Halford E.

The Acts of the Apostles
IN PRESENT-DAY PREACHING

"Luccock makes the Book of Acts come alive because he links it up to parallel situations today." *Albert W. Palmer.*
"There is preaching ammunition in this book to make history in any church." *Expositor.* **Complete in two volumes, each $1.50**

PALMER: Albert W:

The Minister's Job

A book of friendly counsel not only for the minister who is just entering upon his work but for older ministers who are beginning to lose heart in these difficult days. Dr. Palmer *believes* in the ministry as the greatest of vocations. **$1.25**

EDDY: Sherwood

Revolutionary Christianity

A book that will stir alert Christian leaders to their duties and opportunities in these critical days. Only *revolutionary* Christians count! **$2.00**

Minister's Service Book
By JAMES D. MORRISON

"Compact, of convenient arrangement, and of high quality in selection."—*Christian Observer.*

"Of special value are the responsive readings, than which we know none better."—*Colgate-Rochester Bulletin.* **Cloth $1.50. Lea. $3.50**

In That Case
Edited by MURRAY H. LEIFFER

50 of the problems that are continually coming up to puzzle ministers—problems of church administration and the personal problems of parishioners. Dr. Leiffer has called in 10 able pastors—Bernard Clausen, Ivan Lee Holt, Hugh Elmer Brown, E. F. Tittle and others—to help you solve these problems. **$2.00**

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